



Pirie cut a bombastic figure on Wall Street. He negotiated hostile bids for US companies for Robert Maxwell

MARIANA COOK

## Robert S Pirie

Anglophile US banker who owned the finest private collection of early English literature and raised money for British cultural institutions

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Robert Pirie was a high-flying American lawyer and banker who was “the fixer” behind major financial gifts from titans of American business to various British cultural and artistic institutions, including the Bodleian Library, the Royal Academy Trust, the British Library, the Courtauld Institute and the Wallace Collection.

As an Anglophile and an obsessive bibliophile who owned the world’s finest private collection of 16th and 17th-century editions of English literature, Pirie was uniquely well connected to bring America’s wealthiest philanthropists to the same dining tables as supplicant British museum, gallery and library directors. In the most convivial and rarefied atmosphere, and with the utmost discretion, agreements were struck that resulted in funds for expansions, grand exhibitions and priceless artistic and literary gems being saved for the

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